

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 3-56 are pending. Claims 3, 25, 48 and 50-56 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 4-17, 19-24, 26-31, 33-35, 38-43, 45-47 and 49 are rejected. Claims 18, 32, 36, 37 and 44 are objected to as dependent on rejected claims but containing allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating the allowable subject matter of these claims. By this amendment, claims 1, 11, 13 and 14 are amended to expedite allowance. No surrender of document of equivalents is intended by this amendment.

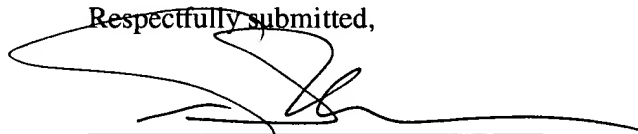
**Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 103**

Claim 1, 4, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 24, 26-29 and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Morris. Claims 1, 6, 7-10, 13-15, 19-24, 26-29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 38, 42, 43, 45, 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Boussignac et al. Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Crocker. Claims 5, 39-41, 46 and 47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) unpatentable over Boussignac et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. None of the references, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests each and every element of these claims prior to amendment. Moreover, none of these references teaches "wherein the open channels are covered by a membrane." Therefore, this rejection is rendered moot.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Prompt examination and allowance are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desired in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Date: **January 3, 2005**

Respectfully submitted,



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